

EARL THOMAS

Earl Thomas started his driving career at the old Soo Speedway just east of Sioux Falls in 1958 at the wheel of a 1941 Ford coupe, No. 77. He later moved to Huset's that same summer and assumed the driving chores of a Chevrolet coupe when regular driver Bill Leesch was injured. He ran a variety of modified stock cars throughout the late 1950s and early 1960s before hooking up with car owner and Hall of Famer Fred Buckmiller. Buckmiller, as well as the promoter of Huset's at that time, had a 1934 Plymouth coupe powered by a Dodge slant six engine and Thomas drove the red No. 5 to several feature wins. With the dawning of the supermodified age, which is widely considered to be 1964, Thomas stepped up his program and became involved in a fierce battle for the track championship in 1966. Thomas, at the wheel of Bob Schrievers sleek No. 97, and Watertown's Roger Swenson, driving his own yellow and white No. 06, battled in a tight race all season. At the final race of the season the two were tied in points. Swenson finished one position in front of Earl at the checkered flag and won the title by a mere two points. Next year Thomas, again armed with the Schriever No. 97, won the supermodified championship by a wide margin and also scored wins at the Clay County Fair in Spencer, Iowa and the South Dakota State Fair in Huron. Driving for Don Hander in 1969, Thomas won his second supermodified Huset's title to become the first driver to win two supermodified championships. He ranks eighth in career sprint car feature wins at Huset's with 21 wins